

CHAPTER

2 Life Skills

Chapter Outline

Why Study Life Skills?

Life Skills

The Psychology of Success

Managing Your Career

Goal Setting

Time Management

Study Skills

Ethics

Personality Development
and Attitude

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Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- ✓ **L01** List the principles that contribute to personal and professional success.
- ✓ **L02** Create a mission statement.
- ✓ **L03** Explain how to set long-term and short-term goals.
- ✓ **L04** Discuss the most effective ways to manage time.
- ✓ **L05** Describe good study habits.
- ✓ **L06** Define ethics.
- ✓ **L07** List the characteristics of a healthy, positive attitude.

Key Terms

Page number indicates where in the chapter the term is used.

ethics
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game plan
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goal setting
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mission statement
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perfectionism
pg. 20

prioritize
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procrastination
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School has one set of challenges, and staying on course for your entire career has another set of challenges. Life skills are particularly important in the field of cosmetology because the hard-and-fast rules that apply to more structured industries are frequently absent in the salon. By its nature, the salon is a creative workplace where you are expected to exercise your artistic talent. The salon is also a highly social atmosphere that requires strong self-discipline and excellent people skills. Besides making a solid connection with each client, you must always stay focused on the task at hand. You must display competence and enthusiasm every time you take care of a client's needs—no matter how you feel, or how many hours you have been at work. Your livelihood and your personal feelings of success depend on how well you maintain this attitude.

WHY STUDY LIFE SKILLS?

Cosmetologists should study and have a thorough understanding of life skills because:

- Practicing good life skills will lead to a more satisfying and productive career in the beauty industry.
- Hair stylists work with many different types of clients and having good life skills can help you keep those interactions positive, in any situation.
- The ability to deal with difficult clients, coworkers, and even friends comes from having well-developed life skills.
- Having good life skills builds high self-esteem, which in turn helps you achieve your goals.

Life Skills

Some of the most important life skills for you to remember and practice in the salon (and outside it) include:

- Being genuinely caring and helpful to others.
- Making good friends.
- Feeling good about yourself.
- Having a sense of humor to take you through difficult situations.
- Maintaining a cooperative attitude.
- Approaching all of your work with a strong sense of responsibility.
- Being consistent in your work.
- Successfully adapting to different situations.

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- Sticking to a goal and seeing a job through to completion.
- Mastering techniques that will help you become more organized.
- Developing a deep reservoir of common sense.

The Psychology of Success

Are you passionate about studying? Do you see yourself sustaining this passion one year, five years, or even ten years from now? While cosmetology school is definitely challenging, school becomes much easier when you put that extra amount of effort, enthusiasm, and excitement into your studies. If your talent is not fueled by the passion necessary to sustain you over the course of your career, you can have all the talent in the world and still not be successful (Figure 2–1).

Guidelines for Success

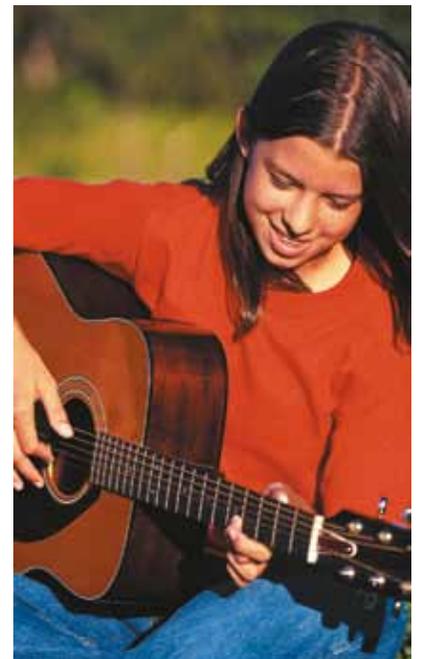
Defining success is a very personal thing. There are some basic principles, however, that form the foundation of all personal and business success. You can begin your path to success right now by examining and putting these principles into practice:

- **Build self-esteem.** Self-esteem is based on inner strength and begins with trusting your ability to achieve your goals. It is essential that you develop high self-esteem while you are still a student.
- **Visualize success.** Imagine yourself working in your dream salon, competently handling clients, and feeling at ease and happy with your situation. The more you practice visualization, the more easily you will turn your vision into reality.
- **Build on your strengths.** Practice doing whatever helps you maintain a positive self-image. If you are good at doing something (e.g., playing the guitar, running, cooking, gardening, or singing), the time you invest in this activity will allow you to feel good about yourself (Figure 2–2). Remember that there may be things you are good at that you may not realize. You may be a good listener, for instance, or a caring and considerate friend.
- **Be kind to yourself.** Stop self-critical or negative thoughts that can work against you. If you make a mistake, tell yourself that it is okay and you will do better next time.
- **Define success for yourself.** Do not depend on other people's definition of success. Instead, become a success in your own eyes. What is right for your sister or a friend, for instance, may not be right for you.
- **Practice new behaviors.** Because creating success is a skill, you can develop it by practicing positive new behaviors, such as speaking with confidence, standing tall, staying true to yourself, or even remembering to use good grammar.



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▲ Figure 2–1
Loving your work is critical to your success.



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▲ Figure 2–2
Spend time on the things you do well.



- **Keep your personal life separate from your work.** Talking about your personal life and that of others at work is counterproductive and can cause the whole salon to suffer.
- **Keep your energy up.** Successful cosmetologists do not run themselves ragged, nor do they eat, sleep, and drink beauty. They take care of their personal needs by spending time with family and friends, having hobbies, enjoying recreational activities, and living a full life.
- **Respect others.** Make a point of relating to everyone you know with a conscious feeling of respect. Exercise good manners with others by using words like *please*, *thank you*, and *excuse me*. Do not interrupt people when they are speaking, and practice being a good listener.
- **Stay productive.** There are three bad habits that can keep you from maintaining peak performance: (1) procrastination, (2) perfectionism, and (3) lack of a game plan. You will see an almost instant improvement in your productivity when you eliminate these troublesome tendencies.
 1. **Procrastination** is putting off until tomorrow what you can do today. This destructive, yet common, habit is a characteristic of poor study habits. (I'll study tomorrow instead of today.) It may also be a symptom of taking on too much, which, in turn, is a symptom of faulty organization.
 2. **Perfectionism** is an unhealthy compulsion to do things perfectly. Success is not defined as doing everything perfectly. In fact, someone who never makes a mistake may not be taking risks necessary for growth and improvement. A better definition of success is not giving up, even when things get really tough.
 3. **Lacking a game plan.** Having a **game plan** is the conscious act of planning your life, instead of just letting things happen. While an overall game plan is usually organized into large blocks of time (five or ten years), it is just as important to set daily, monthly, and yearly goals. Where do you want to be in your career five years from now? What do you have to do this week, this month, and this year to move closer to that goal?

Rules for Success

To be successful, you must take ownership of your education. While your instructors can create motivational circumstances and an environment to assist you in the learning process, the ultimate responsibility for learning is yours. To realize the greatest benefits from your education, commit yourself to the following rules that will take you a long way down the road of success:

- Attend all classes.
- Arrive for class early.

- Have all necessary materials ready.
- Listen attentively to your instructor.
- Highlight important points.
- Take notes for later review.
- Pay close attention during summary and review sessions.
- When something is not clear, ask. If it is still not clear, ask again.

Even after you complete school, you should regularly seek continuing education opportunities. Never stop learning. The cosmetology industry is constantly changing. There are always new trends, techniques, products, and information. Throughout your career you should read industry magazines and books, and you should attend trade shows and advanced educational classes.

Motivation and Self-Management

Motivation propels you to do something. Self-management involves knowing what you want to achieve and keeping yourself on track so that you do eventually achieve your goal. When you are hungry, for example, you are motivated to eat. But it is self-management that helps you to decide how you will get food. A motivated student finds it much easier to learn. The best motivation for learning comes from an inner desire to grow your skills as a professional—a lifelong pursuit that is motivated by the ever-changing world of professional beauty.

If you are personally drawn to cosmetology, then you are likely to be interested in the material you study in school. If your motivation comes from some external source—for instance, your parents, friends, or a vocational counselor—you might have a difficult time finishing school and jump-starting your beauty career. To achieve success, you need more than an external push; you must feel a sense of personal excitement and a good reason for staying the course. You are the one in charge of managing your own life and learning. To do this successfully, you need good self-management skills.

Your Creative Capability

One self-management skill you can draw on is creativity. Creativity means having a talent such as painting, acting, cutting hair, applying makeup, or doing artificial nails. Creativity is also an unlimited inner resource of ideas and solutions. To enhance your creativity, keep these guidelines in mind:

- **Do not be self-critical.** Criticism blocks the creative mind from exploring ideas and discovering solutions to challenges.





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- **Do not look to others for motivation.** Tapping into your own energy and creativity will be the best way to manage your success.
- **Change your vocabulary.** Build a positive vocabulary by using active problem-solving words like *explore*, *analyze*, *determine*, and other words of this nature.
- **Do not try to go it alone.** In today's hectic and pressured world, many talented people find that they are more creative in an environment where people work together and share ideas. This is where the value of a strong salon team comes into play (Figure 2–3). **LO1**

▲ **Figure 2–3**
Build strong relationships for support.

Managing Your Career

As you navigate your beauty career, you will come up against difficulties—shallow spots, rocks, swift currents, and even an occasional iceberg—no matter how creative, talented, or motivated you are. Knowing how to manage your career will make all the difference in staying afloat.

Design a Mission Statement

Every successful business has a business plan. An essential part of business plans is the **mission statement**, which establishes values the institution lives by as well as target goals (Figure 2–4). If you are going to succeed in life, you will need a well thought-out sense of purpose and a plan that supports that purpose. In other words, like a successful business, you will need a mission statement.

In order to know where you want to go and what your mission statement will include, you will need to know what interests you most and which of these interests you wish to pursue. To help you, take the Interests Self-Test (Figure 2–5) before working on your mission statement.

Try to prepare a mission statement in one or two sentences that communicates who you are and what you want for your life. One example of a simple, yet thoughtful, mission statement is: “I am dedicated to pursuing a successful career with dignity, honesty, and integrity.” Your career will be directed by the mission statement you make now. Your mission statement will point you in the right direction and help you feel secure when things temporarily go off course. For reinforcement, keep a copy of your mission statement where you can see it, and read it frequently. **LO2**



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▲ **Figure 2–4**
An example of a personal mission statement.

◀ Figure 2–5
The Interests Self-Test.

The Interests Self-Test

Your personality is tied to your interests. You've already learned about cosmetology specialties. Why not start thinking about which specialty interests you the most? This quick quiz gives you an idea of where your future might lie, based on your personal preferences.

1. Which subject interests you most?
 - A. Chemistry
 - B. Geometry
 - C. Accounting
2. Which of the following would you rather do?
 - A. Analyze a problem
 - B. Solve a problem
 - C. Read about a problem
3. When you look at a painting, what do you notice first?
 - A. Color
 - B. Shape
 - C. Details
4. When it comes to coworkers, would you prefer to:
 - A. Work with one other person on a specific problem
 - B. Work with a team to get lots of ideas
 - C. Work alone or tell them what to do
5. When it comes to salon clients, do you think they:
 - A. Know exactly what they want, and that's good
 - B. Are open to new ideas and suggestions, which is fun
 - C. Probably want a good value

Instructions: Add up the number of As, Bs and Cs. Then check below to see what might be of most interest to you.

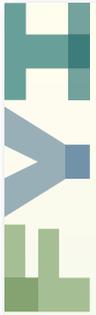
Mostly As. Hair color, which involves chemistry, detail work, and solving specific problems might be a good choice for you. Of course, color can be creative, too, but you need strong fundamentals and a mind for detail to reach the top. Additionally, clients frequently bring in a photo of a specific hair color, and you must know how to get from point A (their natural color) to point B (their desired color).

Mostly Bs. Hair cutting involves an understanding of geometry, lines, and shapes. Clients may want a certain look but they can't always have it if their hair type doesn't allow it. That's why the ability to gather ideas and make suggestions is important. At the advanced level, there are several different cutting methods to try out.

Mostly Cs. Business demands an attention to details, the ability to crunch numbers, and an understanding of client's desires and consumer trends. While you sometimes work alone, you also have to be able to manage other people, which is an additional consideration. If you like taking responsibility for yourself and others, you might consider focusing on the business of salons.

Goal Setting

Some people never have a fixed goal in mind. They go through life one day at a time without really deciding what they want, where they can find it, or how they are going to live their lives once they get it. They drift from one activity to the next aimlessly. Does this describe you? Or do you have direction, drive, desire, and a dream? If so, do you have a reasonable idea of how to go about meeting your goal(s)?



Real-Life Goal Setting: Many salon managers help you set goals, based on the salon's criteria. One common goal is for stylists to sell retail products to a specific number or percentage of clients or in an amount equal to a percentage of billed services. For example, stylists might be required to retail at least 30 percent of gross.

Another common salon goal is that stylists should be booked a certain amount of the time and maintain a specific client-retention rate. Usually, you cannot raise your prices unless you are booked 80 to 90 percent of the time and retain about 70 percent of your clients.

Goals that salons set are almost always tied to your income. In turn, goals that stylists set for themselves are often based on what they want to earn. Salon managers will help you break down financial goals into attainable, daily goals. For example, if you want to gross \$10,000 more a year, you need to earn an additional \$27.39 per day. Of course, you don't work seven days a week. A more realistic number is based on working five days a week, fifty-two weeks out of the year. You need to gross \$38.46 more per day, and fortunately there are many different ways to do it in the salon business. You can sell retail to half your clients; you can up-sell color services and back-bar treatments; or you can get more clients.

Goal setting is the identification of long- and short-term goals that help you decide what you want out of your life. When you know what you want, you can draw a circle around your destination and chart the best course to get you there. By mapping out your goals, you will see where you need to focus your attention and what you need to learn in order to fulfill your dreams.

How Goal Setting Works

There are two types of goals: short term and long term. An example of a short-term goal is to get through a competency exam successfully. Another short-term goal would be graduating from cosmetology school. Short-term goals are usually considered to be those you wish to accomplish in a year or less.

Long-term goals are measured in larger sections of time such as five years, ten years, or even longer. An example of a long-term goal is becoming a salon owner in five years.

Once you have organized your thinking around your goals, write them down in short-term and long-term columns and divide each set of goals into workable segments. In this way, your goals will not seem out of sight or overwhelming. For example, one of your long-term goals should be to get your license to practice cosmetology. At first, getting this license might seem to require an overwhelming amount of time and effort. However, when you separate this goal into short-term goals (such as going to class on time, completing homework assignments, and mastering techniques), you see that each step on the way to the long-term goal can be accomplished without too much difficulty or stress.

The important thing to remember about goal setting is to have a plan and to re-examine it often in order to make sure that you are staying on track. Even people who have fame, fortune, and wide-spread respect continue to set goals for themselves. While they may adjust their goals and action plans as they go along, successful people know that goals move them toward additional successes (Figure 2-6 and Figure 2-7). **LO3**

HOW TO SET AND TRACK SHORT-TERM GOALS

NUMBER	GOAL SETTING CHECKLIST	COMPLETION DATE	DONE
1.	Read Chapter 2. Action Steps: Read first part at lunch; finish it after dinner.	6/09/2012	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Practice speaking to clients in a pleasing voice. Action Steps: Do with family tonight.	6/10/2012	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Create my own mission statement. Action Steps: Review sample in Chapter Two; write my own.	6/15/2012	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Start learning trends. Action Steps: Search online, read trade and beauty magazines. Make a 5-word "trend list."	6/20/2012	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Prepare to pass the Chapter 2 exam. Action Steps: Review what I read, ask instructor any questions, have study session with 2 friends.	7/10/2012	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Practice being on time! Action Steps: Set alarm for 15 minutes earlier. Give self \$1 every time I get to class 10 minutes early.	Start 6/20 5 days in a row by 7/20	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Build my vocabulary. Action Steps: Buy book or find Website. Learn 1 new word a day.	Daily	<input type="checkbox"/>

▲ **Figure 2-6**
A sample of how to set and track short-term goals.

MY GOALS

NUMBER	GOAL SETTING CHECKLIST	COMPLETION DATE	DONE
1.			<input type="checkbox"/>
2.			<input type="checkbox"/>
3.			<input type="checkbox"/>
4.			<input type="checkbox"/>
5.			<input type="checkbox"/>
6.			<input type="checkbox"/>
7.			<input type="checkbox"/>

▲ **Figure 2-7**
Photocopy this template and fill in your own goals!

ACTivity

It is estimated that as much as four hours in the average person's day are spent checking e-mail, looking at Websites, and watching videos. The average teenager sends nearly 80 text messages a day! To find out if you are managing your time well, try this exercise:

- Write down the time in the morning when you first go online, check e-mail, or send a text message.
- Do what you normally do online, then note the time you finish these activities.
- Throughout the day try to estimate (and add to your list) how much additional time you spend on these activities.
- Add up the total time at the end of your day.

Are you surprised? Time-management experts recommend that you work for the first forty-five minutes or hour of the day, avoiding e-mailing, Web browsing, and texting during this time. Instead, use this time to plan your day, review reading materials for school, or do other work.

This first hour of the day is often the best time to accomplish something concrete because it is quiet and often interruption-free. Starting your day by being productive helps you develop good time-management skills for life.



Time Management

One thing that all time-management experts agree on is that each of us has an *inner organizer*. When we pay attention to our natural rhythms, we can learn how to manage our time efficiently, allowing us to reach our goals faster and with less frustration. Here are some of the most effective ways to manage time:

- Learn to **prioritize** by ordering tasks on your to-do list from most important to least important.
- When designing your own time management system, make sure it will work for you. For example, if you are a person who needs a fair amount of flexibility, schedule in some blocks of unstructured time.
- Never take on more than you can handle. Learn to say “no” firmly but kindly, and mean it. You will find it easier to complete your tasks if you limit your activities and do not spread yourself too thin.
- Learn problem-solving techniques that will save you time and needless frustration.
- Give yourself some down time whenever you are frustrated, overwhelmed, worried, or feeling guilty. You lose valuable time and energy when you are in a negative state of mind. Unfortunately, there may be situations—such as when you are in the classroom—in which you cannot get up and walk away. To handle these difficult times,

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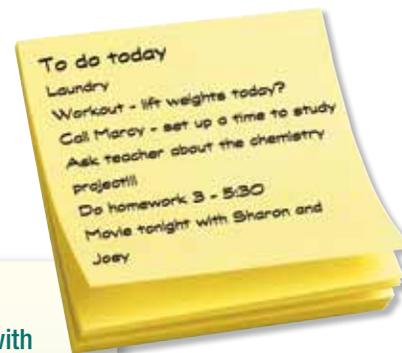
try practicing the technique of deep breathing. Just fill your lungs as much as you can and exhale slowly. After about five to ten breaths, you will usually find that you have calmed down and your inner balance has been restored.

- Carry a notepad, an organizer, or your electronic notepad with you at all times. You never know when a good idea might strike or when you will need to add a task to your schedule. Write these things down before they slip your mind!
- Make daily, weekly, and monthly schedules that show exam times, study sessions, and any other regular commitments. Plan your leisure time around these commitments, rather than the other way around (Figure 2–8).
- Identify times during the day when you are typically energetic and times when you typically want or need to relax. Plan your schedule accordingly.
- Reward yourself with a special treat or activity for work well done and time managed efficiently.
- Do not neglect physical activity. Remember that exercise and recreation stimulate clear thinking and efficient planning.
- Schedule at least one block of free time each day. This will be your hedge against events that come up unexpectedly, such as car trouble, baby-sitting problems, helping a friend in need, or any other unforeseen circumstance.
- Understand the value of to-do lists for the day and the week. These lists help you prioritize tasks and activities, a key element to organizing your time efficiently (Figure 2–9).
- Make time management a habit. **LO4**



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▲ Figure 2–8
Keep a schedule for yourself and refer to it frequently.



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▲ Figure 2–9
An example of a to-do list.

H **Real-Life Time Management:** In the salon, the most important aspect of time management is staying on schedule with your bookings so that you can greet each client at the scheduled appointment time. This means completing the service during the time allotted. Some salons book haircuts on the hour; others book them in intervals of forty-five minutes. Accomplished stylists do a cut in half an hour, but they usually schedule clients for longer so they can upsell more services if the opportunity presents itself.

Making sure that you arrive on time, start your first client as soon as he or she arrives, and stay on schedule will take you a long way toward success as a stylist. The front desk and salon manager can be a tremendous help if you find yourself falling behind or if you have the opportunity to add-on a color service and need help fitting it into your day. With experience, you'll learn to accommodate late clients and add-on services like a pro.

Study Skills



If you find studying overwhelming, focus on small tasks one at a time. For example, instead of trying to study for three hours at a stretch and suffering a personal defeat when you fold after forty minutes, set the bar lower by studying in smaller chunks of time. If your mind tends to wander in class, try writing down key words or phrases as your instructor discusses them. Any time you lose your focus, do not hesitate to stay after class and ask questions based on your notes.

Another way to get a better handle on studying is to find other students who are helpful and supportive. The more you discuss new material with others, the more comfortable you and they will become with the material. In the end, everyone will be more successful. If possible, study together (**Figure 2–10**).

Establishing Good Study Habits

Part of developing consistently good study habits is knowing where, when, and how to study.

Where

- Establish a comfortable, quiet spot where you can study without interruptions.



▲ **Figure 2–10**
Studying with a friend can be effective and fun.

- Have everything you need—books, pens, paper, proper lighting, and so on—before you begin studying.
- Remain as alert as possible by sitting upright. Reclining will make you sleepy!

When

- Start out by estimating how much study time you need.
- Study when you feel most energetic and motivated.
- Practice effective time management by studying during blocks of time that would otherwise be wasted—such as while you are waiting in the doctor’s office, taking a bus across town, and so forth.

How

- Study just one section of a chapter at a time, instead of reading the entire chapter at once.
- Make note of key words and phrases as you go along.
- Test yourself on each section to ensure that you understand and remember the key points of each chapter.

Remember that every effort you make to follow through on your education is an investment in your future. The progress you make with your learning will increase your confidence and self-esteem across the board. In fact, when you have mastered a range of information and techniques, your self-esteem will soar right along with your grades.  **LO5**

FOCUS ON

THE GOAL

Determine whether your goal-setting plan is an effective one by asking yourself these key questions:

- Are there specific skills I will need to learn in order to meet my goals?
- Is the information I need to reach my goals readily available?
- Am I willing to seek out a mentor or a coach to enhance my learning?
- What is the best method or approach that will allow me to accomplish my goals?
- Am I open to finding better ways of putting my plan into practice?

Ethics

Ethics are the moral principles by which we live and work. In the salon setting, ethical standards should guide your conduct with clients and fellow employees. When your actions are respectful, courteous, and helpful, you are behaving in an ethical manner.

There are five professional behaviors that will show you are an ethical person. You can practice ethics in the salon every day by:

- Providing skilled and competent services.
- Being honest, courteous, and sincere.
- Avoiding sharing clients’ private matters with others—even your closest friends.
- Participating in continuing education and staying on track with new information, techniques, and skills.
- Giving clients accurate information about treatments and products.

 **LO6**

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Ethical people often embody the following qualities:

- **Self-care.** Many service providers suffer from stress and eventually burnout because they focus too much of their energy and time on other people and too little on themselves. If you are to be truly helpful to others, it is essential to take care of yourself. Try The Self-Care Test to assess how you are doing (Figure 2–11).
- **Integrity.** Maintain your integrity by matching your behavior and actions to your values. For example, if you believe it is unethical to increase your sales by recommending products that clients don't really need, then do not engage in that behavior. On the other hand, if you feel that a client would benefit from certain products and additional services, it would be unethical not to give the client that information.
- **Discretion.** Do not share your personal issues with clients. Likewise, never breach confidentiality by repeating personal information that clients have shared with you.
- **Communication.** Your responsibility to behave ethically extends to your communications with customers and coworkers. In other words, you should always be honest.

The Self-Care Test

Some people know intuitively when they need to stop, take a break, or even take a day off. Other people forget when to eat. You can judge how well you take care of yourself by noting how you feel physically, emotionally, and mentally. Here are some questions to ask yourself to see how you rate on the self-care scale.

1. Do you wait until you are exhausted before you stop working?
2. Do you forget to eat nutritious food and substitute junk food on the fly?
3. Do you say you will exercise and then put off starting a program?
4. Do you have poor sleep habits?
5. Are you constantly nagging yourself about not being good enough?
6. Are your relationships with people filled with conflict?
7. When you think about the future are you unclear about the direction you will take?
8. Do you spend most of your spare time watching TV?
9. Have you been told you are too stressed and yet you ignore these concerns?
10. Do you waste time and then get angry with yourself?

Score 5 points for each yes. A score of 0-15 says that you take pretty good care of yourself, but you would be wise to examine those questions you answered yes to. A score of 15-30 indicates that you need to rethink your priorities. A score of 30-50 is a strong statement that you are neglecting yourself and may be headed for high stress and burnout. Reviewing the suggestions in these chapters will help you get back on track.

▲ Figure 2–11
The Self-Care Test.



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Personality Development and Attitude

Some occupations require less interaction with people than others. For example, computer programmers do not usually interact with all different sorts of people every day. Cosmetologists, however, deal with people from all walks of life—every day, all day. It is useful, therefore, to have some sense of how different personality traits and attitudes can affect your success.

Refer regularly to the following characteristics of a healthy, positive attitude to ensure that they match your self-description.

- **Diplomacy.** Being assertive is a good thing because it helps people understand your position. However, it is a short step from assertive to aggressive or even bullying. Take your attitude temperature to see how well you practice the art of diplomacy. Diplomacy—also known as *tact*—is the ability to deliver truthful, even sometimes critical or difficult, messages in a kind way.
- **Pleasing tone of voice.** The tone of your voice is an inborn personality trait, but if your natural voice is harsh or if you tend to mumble, you can consciously improve by speaking more softly or more clearly. Also, if you have a positive attitude, this will shine through in a pleasant delivery, even if your tone of voice is not ideal.



FOCUS ON

THE WHOLE PERSON

An individual's personality is the sum total of her or his inborn characteristics, attitudes, and behavioral traits. While you may not be able to alter most of your inborn characteristics, you certainly can work on your attitude. Attitude improvement is a process that continues throughout life. In both your business and personal life, a pleasing attitude gains more associates, clients, and friends. You will know you have a pleasing attitude when you are able to see the good in difficult situations. People enjoy the company of individuals who can put a positive "spin" on things.

- **Emotional stability.** Our emotions are important, but they do require some control. Some people express themselves excessively or inappropriately. When they are happy, they get almost frantic; when they are angry, they fly into a rage. Learning how to handle a confrontation and how to share your feelings without going overboard are important indicators of maturity and important demonstrations of emotional stability.
- **Sensitivity.** Sensitivity is a combination of understanding, empathy, and acceptance. Being sensitive means being compassionate and responsive to other people.
- **Values and goals.** Neither values nor goals are inborn characteristics; we acquire them as we move through life. Values and goals guide our behavior and give us direction.
- **Receptivity.** To be receptive means to be interested in other people, and to be responsive to their opinions, feelings, and ideas. Receptivity involves taking the time to really listen, instead of just pretending to do so (**Figure 2–12**).
- **Effective communication skills.** Effective communicators usually have warm, caring personalities. They usually have an easy time talking about themselves and listening to what others have to say. When they want something, they can ask for it clearly and directly, and they pay attention when somebody else is speaking to them.

LO7

► **Figure 2–12**
Being receptive is an important personal skill.



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Review Questions

1. What principles contribute to personal and professional success?
2. How do you create a mission statement? (Give an example.)
3. How do you go about setting long- and short-term goals?
4. What are some of the most effective ways to manage time?
5. How do you describe good study habits?
6. What is the definition of the word ethics?
7. What are the characteristics of a healthy, positive attitude?

Chapter Glossary

ethics	The moral principles by which we live and work.
game plan	The conscious act of planning your life, instead of just letting things happen.
goal setting	The identification of long-term and short-term goals that helps you decide what you want out of life.
mission statement	A statement that establishes the values that an individual or institution lives by, as well as future goals.
perfectionism	An unhealthy compulsion to do things perfectly.
prioritize	To make a list of tasks that needs to be done in the order of most-to-least important.
procrastination	Putting off until tomorrow what you can do today.